

Laboratory to demolish excavation enclosures at Material Disposal Area B near DP Road

November 1, 2012



Work is beginning this week

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, November 1, 2012—Los Alamos National Laboratory is about to begin demolishing the metal enclosures used to cover the excavation and cleanup of a decades-old waste disposal site at the historic Technical Area 21.

Pre-demolition activities are beginning this week and the work should be completed by the end of March 2013. The project brings the Laboratory closer to transferring the six-acre tract of land to Los Alamos County.

The metal structures, which resemble airplane hangars, were installed in 2010 to protect workers and the public from exposure to hazardous and radiological contamination while excavating and packaging contaminated debris and soil from Material Disposal Area B, near DP road in Los Alamos.

“Removal of the structures marks the completion of a highly successful environmental cleanup project at Material Disposal Area B,” said Ed Worth, federal project manager with the National Nuclear Security Administration’s Los Alamos Site Office. “We look forward to the day we officially turn the property over for the benefit of our community.”

After the structures have been demolished, the debris will be packaged in accordance with Department of Transportation requirements and shipped offsite to an approved waste disposal facility.

MDA B was used from 1944 to 1948 as a waste disposal site for Manhattan Project and Cold War-era research and production. The Laboratory received \$212 million in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to perform environmental remediation work.

In addition to the work at MDA B, the Laboratory’s Recovery Act projects included demolition of 24 old, unused buildings and the installation of 16 regional groundwater monitoring wells.

The waste disposal site at MDA B consisted of a series of narrow trenches up to 35 feet deep. During the excavation, the Laboratory removed about 47,000 cubic yards of contaminated debris and soil from the six-acre site. Though much of the waste excavated from the landfill was soil and run-of-the-mill trash such as cardboard and discarded protective clothing, the excavation also uncovered the remains of two 1940s pickup trucks. The excavated waste was packaged appropriately and transported to disposal facilities, and the trenches were backfilled with clean soil.

The safety of workers, the public, and the environment will be the top priority during the demolition and disposal of the structures.

“Workers will wear protective clothing and follow approved safety procedures throughout this project,” said project manager Stephani Swickley. “To make sure we’re protecting the public and our employees, we’ll be conducting environmental monitoring of personnel as well as the air around the work zones and along DP Road.”

Traffic in the area, including the intersection of DP Road and Trinity Drive, is not expected to increase substantially. However, large trucks and heavy equipment will be present in the area.

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